

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, SOPN, AFSP, UR, US

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENTS' RENT HIKES

REFS: A) MOSCOW 11653 B) 11550 C) STATE 189627

1. BASED ON EMBASSY'S CALL ON MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT HEAD SOFINSKIY (REF A), EUR/SOV DEPUTY DIRECTOR MCCALL CALLED IN PRESS COUNSELOR OF SOVIET EMBASSY VALENTIN M. KAMENEV AUGUST 15 TO RAISE CORRESPONDENTS PROBLEMS WITH UPDK OVER RENT INCREASES.

2. KAMENEV WAS TOLD THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS NOT NEGOTIATING FOR CORRESPONDENTS NOR WAS IT QUESTIONING JUSTIFICATION FOR RENT INCREASE BUT RATHER WAS CONCERNED OVER FACT THAT UPDK WAS UNWILLING TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL WITH CORRESPONDENTS. MCCALL URGED THAT UPDK MEET WITH DELEGATION OF NEWS BUREAUS SO THAT UPDK COULD EXPLAIN REASON FOR SUCH EXORBITANT RENT INCREASES AND DIALOGUE COULD BEGIN.

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3. KAMENEV RESPONDED THAT SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON WERE UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE RENT INCREASES WITH LANDLORDS OR DEPARTMENT OF STATE. SOVIETS SIMPLY RECEIVED LETTERS EACH YEAR FROM LANDLORDS RAISING RENTS AND HAD TO COMPLY WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO NEGOTIATE LESSER RATES.

4. MCCALL ASKED KAMENEV TO CITE AN INSTANCE WHERE SOVIETS HAD SOUGHT AND BEEN DENIED AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS A RENT INCREASE AND POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS HAD OPTION TO SHOP AROUND FOR LESS EXPENSIVE QUARTERS IF RENTS WENT UP IN WASHINGTON WHEREAS AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS COULD NOT FREELY OBTAIN LESS EXPENSIVE QUARTERS BECAUSE UPDK CONTROLLED ALL HOUSING.

5. MCCALL ALSO OBSERVED THAT SOME NEWS BUREAUS MIGHT HAVE TO CONSIDER CLOSING IF SUCH HIGH RATES WERE IMPOSED. THIS SHOULD CONCERN BOTH GOVERNMENTS SINCE IT COULD AFFECT BALANCE OF NUMBERS OF NEWS BUREAUS IN EACH OTHERS COUNTRIES.

6. KAMENEV SAID HE WOULD CONVEY THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCERNS TO MOSCOW.

7. IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES, DEPARTMENT HAS BRIEFED CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR AND WASHINGTON POST REPRESENTATIVES OF APPROACHES BY EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT STRESSING FACT THAT NEITHER EMBASSY NOR DEPARTMENT WAS IN POSITION TO NEGOTIATE LOWER RENTS FOR NEWS BUREAUS BUT RATHER THAT WE SOUGHT TO ESTABLISH SOME FORM OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN UPDK AND CORRESPONDENTS. VANCE

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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